

MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE
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IN ATTENDANCE - 30 in total including:

- Moderator Peggy Denby
- Special Guest Captain Coxton of the Atlanta Fire Department
- Special Guest Sgt. Anderson of MARTA Police
- APD: Officer Hale (also works for MPSA)
- MPSA Patrol Coordinator Barry Miller

CORRESPONDENCE / OPENING NOTES

E-mail 1: *I want to alert you to a break in on Monroe Circle last night. The owners of the home are away, but relatives are currently staying at the house. The break in happened at about 11pm. The relatives were gone, but arrived home to find the dog acting unusually. Upon investigation they found a back window open, a set of burglar tools lying around, and a few things in a closet ruffled through. They think they might have come home mid-burglary and scared the person off, as it appears nothing was taken and the person left in a hurry. A police report has been filed.*

E-mail 2: *I just caught a guy digging through my mailbox. He is a medium build black man, young, maybe 22-28 years of age and nicely cut hair. Very clean cut and well dressed. When I asked him what he was doing he asked me if "[male name]" was here. Then he went out to the sidewalk and pretended to call his friend that he thought he might find in my mailbox*

String of burglaries

We have been hearing reports of burglaries in the area. Tuscany was hit 7 times in a two-week period – three of which occurred on the same day. The Dakota and Post Parkside have also had several burglaries in recent weeks. Police believe that it may be the same person doing this.

We also got word that a newly released career burglar is now hanging out in the area, along with two other people. They are described as white males in their 20s to 30s. The career guy was said to have been heard talking at length about who he likes to burglarize and how he does so. There have 2-3 that fit this guy's M.O. (jiggling or kicking in back doors, among other things).

A resident at Tuscany reported seeing someone loitering around the area fitting a similar to the career burglar. He was described in an E-mail as follows: *He was a white male, in his early 40's, with dirty blonde hair, and scruffy facial hair. He was smoking a cigarette, and carrying an American flag golf umbrella and 2 large full black duffel bags that were strapped to his shoulders. He was wearing gray cammo pants, a white jacket, and didn't look anything like a typical Tuscany resident.*

An E-mail we received about one of these: *The break-ins happened during the day sometime between 12:00pm and 5:00pm. They entered by way of front door; they somehow dug into the dead bolt with a flat head screwdriver or some sort of tool. We have a description from one resident that thinks they may have seen him. The suspect was described as a white male about 5'7 or 5'8, very scruffy looking, 5 o'clock shadow beard. Both apartments that were broken into, the residents had left their blinds wide open and all the lights off. I have been telling people to keep blinds shut when they are not home or leave a light on, so it is not so obvious that no one is home.*

An Eighth Street resident had his garage broken into. Tools and golf clubs were taken. The perpetrator had to have used a vehicle to do this.

Other incidents

The manager of CVS pharmacy was robbed at gunpoint in a similar manner as the manager was robbed at McRay's during the summer.

MPSA Patrol in action

We reported that Sgt. Miller caught some of the aggressive panhandlers at Ponce Square last Fall. Last week he dealt with two more aggressive panhandlers in the parking lot of Midtown Promenade. One of which is a minor and the other an adult. The adult had marijuana in his possession and was on probation for possession of cocaine with intent to distribute. Both live in Decatur.

Web tip

It is amazing how easily one can become a victim of theft at a gas station, even with lots of people around. See the video at http://video.sheriff.org/psa_cartheft.shtml.

VOLUNTEER PATROL

We are seeking MPSA members to drive the patrol vehicle during the daytime when the regular patrol is not on duty. This is intended as an enhancement rather than a substitute for the regular patrol. Volunteers would drive the truck for 2-4 hours in the residential portions of the neighborhood. Volunteers would watch for suspicious activity and report such to the police. Please contact us if you are interested in doing this.

SPECIAL GUEST: Captain Coxton of the Atlanta Fire Department

Captain Coxton introduced the ACERT (Atlanta Citizen's Emergency Response Team) training which targets neighborhood associations, businesses, faith communities, and other organizations.

The ACERT training program will prepare thousands of Atlanta residents and workers to take care of themselves for up to 72 hours following a natural disaster or catastrophic event. As a team member, you will learn to apply basic skills to help sustain and save lives until help arrives.

The ACERT program will teach participants to:

- Describe the types of hazards most likely to affect their homes and communities.
- Describe the function of ACERT and their roles in immediate response
- Take steps to prepare themselves for a disaster.
- Identify and reduce potential fire hazards in their homes and workplaces.
- Work as a team to apply basic fire suppression strategies, resources, and safety measures to extinguish a burning liquid.
- Apply techniques for opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating shock.
- Conduct triage.
- Perform head-to-toe assessments.
- Select and set up a treatment area.
- Employ basic treatments for various injuries.

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- Identify planning and size-up requirements for potential search and rescue situations.
- Describe the most common technique searching a structure
- Use safe techniques for debris removal and victim extrication.
- Describe ways to protect rescuers during search and rescue.

The ACERT training consists of the following sessions:

- Session I: Disaster Preparedness
- Session II: Fire Safety
- Session III: Disaster Medical Part I – Life Threatening Injuries
- Session IV: Disaster Medical Part II – Assessment
- Session V: Light Search and Rescue
- Session VI: Team Organization and Disaster Psychology
- Session VII: Final Exercise

The MPSA would like to see this training conducted in Midtown. If you are interested in participating in such a program please let us know so we can plan this program. If you are interested in heading up this project for us please let us know.

The training requires a minimum participation of 15 people and a maximum of 25 people per team. If more than 25 are interested we would have to add teams accordingly. The teams will stay together and receive updates and refreshment training for years to come.

More information is available at the ACERT website - www.acertga.org.

SPECIAL GUEST SGT. ANDERSON OF MARTA POLICE

The MARTA Police emergency number 404 848 4911. Suspicious persons/behavior at or around a MARTA station can be reported to that number. It is a good idea to put that in your cell phone if you use MARTA regularly.

The MARTA police have the same arrest powers, including for traffic violations, as any other police agency in Fulton and Dekalb Counties.

MARTA Police has a force of 300 sworn officers. In the Midtown area there is one patrol car, 1 supervisor in patrol car, and one or two officers at each of the three Midtown stations (North Avenue, Midtown, and Arts Center). This is not nearly enough but they are working to get more officers riding the trains in the near future.

We have asked MARTA to attend all our meetings. Sgt Anderson came from MARTA Police at our request to Major Lindahl, North Precinct Commander.

We hope the Midtown community will be more proactive in expressing concerns and problems related to MARTA, as public transportation is crucial in making Midtown pedestrian-oriented.

MARTA police communicates with APD thru a dispatcher. A plan is in the works in which all emergency and public safety personnel will use the same digital radio system and be able to communicate with each other. There are some digital radios in use for training. The Atlanta Police Department is no longer using codes to describe situations - all personnel will use plain language to communicate.

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APD AND MPSA PATROL

As mentioned above, there has been a rash of burglaries. Residents should keep an extra eye out especially during the day, and to make sure your home is secure. Valuables should never be left in cars, as this only invites a car break-in.

Residents are urged to install a secure mailbox. Identity theft has become a serious problem everywhere including Midtown. Becoming a victim of identity theft will cost you considerable time, money and administrative hassles.

PIEDMONT PARK

Sgt. Miller, who also coordinates Piedmont Park's off-duty officers, noted that the park has added officers during the day. There are still officers during the night in the park. Sgt. Miller stressed that the park is closed from 11pm to 6am. Officers sometimes observe walking their dogs and jogging during curfew hours, especially early in the morning. Anyone found in any city park, including Piedmont Park, during curfew hours is liable for arrest under city ordinance, which has to be applied *consistently*. Police officers are not at liberty to arrest only sex cruisers, drug users, and vagrants while letting off joggers and dog-walkers with a warning – even the pooch goes to the pound for being in the park during curfew hours.

And besides, dangerous elements sometimes take over the park at night - hence the need for special police coverage there in the first place, such as thugs pacing back and forth on Oak Hill scouting for someone walking along 10th Street to rob.

NEXT SAFETY MEETING

The next public safety meeting will be held Monday February 12th, 7pm, at Mary Mac's. Tentatively, the Atlanta Police Foundation will be our special guest.

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A Safer Midtown... You are truly a part of it! www.midtownponce.org

The Midtown Public Safety Meeting is held at 7pm on the second Monday of the month, at Mary Mac's Tearoom.

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